

# ROMANCE OF FANNIE WARD

# AND NINA FARRINGTON



Miss Fannie Ward at the time of her marriage to Lewis

**FANNY WARD**, poor, pretty and ambitious chorus girl in "Sinbad" at the Garden Theater in Manhattan a few years ago, married the late Sam Lewis, "Banker of Princes," and is now the richest woman in England.

Her friend, Nina Farrington, clever, beautiful, and desperately poor, singing in "The Duke of Chappies" at the Grand Opera House in New York for \$1.50 a night, is now rich and influential, the wife of Lieutenant John Lesmoir Gordon of the King's Life Guards in London, retired.

The rise of these two chorus girls from the footlights in America to wealth and fame in England makes one of the most fascinating stories from the book of real life.

Fanny Ward and Nina Farrington were girl friends. Both were poor, sensitive, clever and ambitious. One is the most envied woman in England because of her great wealth, and the other has married an idol of the British army. The romances of these two girls, closely woven together as they are, prove the most attractive that have furnished food for the gossips of the two greatest English speaking cities for fifty years.

## Fortune's Favorites.

**PRETTY** Nina Farrington, daughter of a British colonel who won fame in India, and whose two sons are now officers in the British army and were both wounded in the defense of Mafeking, was born among the green hills and tiny farms of York, in the North of England.

Her father, constantly away with the army, had little chance to become acquainted with his little girl, and she grew up in her grandfather's library in the old homestead. There she filled her head with poetry and romance and a great desire to become the leading actress of the English speaking race, even as she imagined her father to be the greatest general of the empire.

It was while reciting for amateur theatricals in the village that a young Scotch Highlander, John Lesmoir Gordon, member of the old Scotch noble family, happened into the little English village, and hardly through Rugby himself, and destined, so folks said, for the army, dropped in to see the play.

In the dance that followed he was introduced to the village belle, Nina Farrington, and danced with her over the green all the evening. It was years before they met again, but the vision of the grave, strong young Scotchman, with his handsome eyes and broad shoulders, remained in the memory of Nina Farrington for years.

The years that he spent in India, and afterward in South Africa during the war, brought many thrilling memories to a place in his mind. But the pretty, sweet faced English girl always held a place somewhere in the depths of his tempestuous soldier's heart.

Years went by, and Nina Farrington, having graduated from a girl's school in France, appeared upon the vaudeville stage in London. Then she came to America, where she was told she would be more appreciated and could, the sooner make her mark.



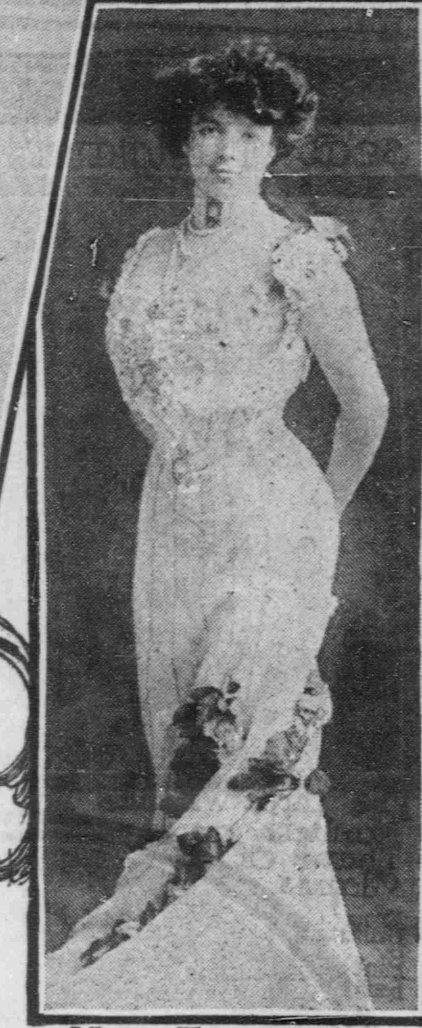
Mrs. Sam Lewis to-day (Fannie Ward)



Fannie Ward, in 1893 Photo by Sarony



Nina Farrington, 1894 Photo by Sarony



Nina Farrington to-day Photo by Maxey

## London's Richest Widow and the Best Dressed Woman at King Edward's Coronation, Once a Chorus Girl, Plays the Matchmaker, and Nina Farrington, Her Old Friend of the Footlights, Weds a Wealthy Hero of the Boer War.

In the meantime Fanny Ward, an alert, bright-faced American girl, had grown up in St. Louis and began to shine in school as the possessor of a remarkable voice. Mrs. Ward urged her to cultivate this voice and surrounded her with every advantage a girl could have.

At sixteen years of age, a year after Nina Farrington had made a hit as a chorus singer in New York, Fanny Ward became quite the most popular chorus singer in the Middle West, and her mother consented to her coming to New York to accept a position. Here she found that to be famous "out West" didn't mean that she would immediately be so here.

She was possessed of a great ambition, however, and that was to occupy the center of the stage while the orchestra trilled the moving chords that denote the presence of a star.

Here from time to time the stage managers received inquiries from rich and wealthy patrons of the opera and concert, the vaudeville and drama, concerning a very beautiful girl with large, earnest eyes and full, robust voice, who stood far back in the lines as the chorus rolled on and off the stage.

These inquiries began to cause curiosity in the minds of the managers, and long before she dreamed of it herself, the directors were watching little Fanny Ward with wonder and pleasure in their faces.

Then she was given a small part—Cupid in "Sinbad," at the Garden Theater. One day Nina Farrington went to see the play, and immediately picked out Fanny Ward as the bright particular star of the company. Nina Farrington, who had been very successful after her year or two of hardship in New York, was playing in "The Duke of Chappies" and the young bloods of

the metropolis waited for her at the stage door in droves, sent her flowers by the bushel, and presents so many that she knew not what to do with them. She sent for Fanny Ward, and, without letting the St. Louis girl know who her patron was, got her a place in the same company she was in. Then for the first time Fanny Ward knew what popularity was. She was courted and applauded. She made the acquaintance of many wealthy young women, and more wealthy young men.

She was popular everywhere, and her petite, boyishly jolly face was frequently seen on the Avenue in swell turnouts, driven by the gallants who crowded the theaters to see her and hear her sing.

### Her First Romance.

Fanny Ward—winsome, slender, with much more than the average intelligence—received the attentions of all these gallants without a flutter of her own heart till she met Clarence Eugene Brown, son of Vice Commodore Edward M. Brown, of the New York Yacht Club.

He was a prince of good fellows, owner of a yacht that was the envy and pride of social New York, and master of a stable full of good horses. Fanny Ward became the heroine of many yachting cruises. Always accompanied by her mother as chaperon, she still kept her mind fixed upon her high ambition to be the leading woman on the American stage. At last, however, it became apparent that she thought more of Brown than of her lines, and then it was whispered that they were to be married.

There was a shock. There had been a quarrel and the young people parted. The aftermath was a suit for \$25,000 against Brown for breach of promise, and another brought against him to compensate Mrs. Ward for the loss of

her daughter's services. The cases became famous. Brown, who was known as "Duke" to the sportive set in New York, refused to discuss the case, and it was suddenly dropped. The public never knew how it came out.

### As a Gaiety Girl.

One day Nina Farrington met Fanny Ward at the Garden Theater, and learned that the latter was going to London. The two girls did not meet again for years. In London the little American became as famous as Nina Farrington had become in America. The joyous crowd of young chappies who attend the Gaiety Theater fell head over heels in love with her. The Gaiety is the chappies' paradise, and as the chappies represent some of the greatest families in England the Gaiety girl is apt to make rich and influential friends.

But one day she was introduced to a serious-eyed, rather dignified man, who seemed a trifle older than the average theatergoers who took her and her friends to suppers and wine parties, to drives and boating on the Thames.

This man was "Sam" Lewis. At once confidential and respectful, he was at the same time masterful. Fanny Ward wrote to Nina Farrington in New York that he seemed to her to be the most sensible fellow she had ever met. After she had accepted many of his invitations to dinner, and his beautiful gifts, she one day ventured to say to him that he was, she feared, wasting more money upon her than he could afford to do.

He looked surprised, and then amused, and finally annoyed. He asked if she knew anything about his finances or business. She had not taken the trouble to find out, but after that tilt she inquired, and found that he was the most famous money lender in England, and that he was a millionaire many

times over. He was known as the "banker of princes."

At the time Lewis proposed to her, offering his hand and his heart, his fortune and his fame, Fanny Ward held court in her mother's apartments in a fashionable hotel in London, and among her ardent admirers were many whose titles and pedigrees would have brought big prices on this side of the water. But she had a Yankee sense of the comparative worth of things, and realized the misery that many of these proffered titles carried with them. She refused them all, and accepted the money lender and his fabulous fortune.

### Married the Millions.

Nina Farrington, courted and beloved in New York, wrote to her friend in England that she had done the eminently proper thing. People who had known the grasping tendencies of Lewis prophesied that once married to Fanny Ward he would shut off her allowance and treat her shabbily. But no sooner was he married that he began showering more and more gifts upon her.

He gave her a million dollars' worth of diamonds. Her house at No. 3 Berkeley square, in the centre of the fashionable section, and nearly opposite that of the Duke and Duchess of Devonshire, is a gem. It is beautifully and exquisitely furnished.

The fact that most of the social sets of London stood in fear of Lewis because they had at some time owed or still did owe him money caused his young American wife to be treated kindly, and she secured a sort of social position in a semi-smart set all her own. Then a peculiar whim seized her. She determined to go upon the stage again. She missed the adulation of her chorus-girl days, proving that to her art was

a reality and a thing more to be prized than fine gold. This time she went upon the stage as a leading lady in legitimate parts and her success was great. She made a hit in "The Girl I Left Behind Me."

Few women in London possess such splendid jewels. Her pearls alone are said to be worth \$125,000, and in addition she has diamonds that would be the envy of royalty. Her gold jewel bag and several rings reposing therein became famous when they were lost in the Duchess of Manchester's house, where they had been dropped by Mrs. Lewis and carefully put away by an officious maid, who neglected to mention it until Scotland Yard had been notified. The value of the bag and the rings was then placed at \$50,000.

In the meantime Nina Farrington was meeting with successes and rebuffs in America. Rather more successes than rebuffs, however. She had made a fortune. She had hosts of friends. Some one had given her a tip with which she one day went into Wall Street and made a hundred thousand dollars in wheat.

The Boer war broke out and Nina Farrington's brothers took conspicuous parts in the hottest fighting at the front. She wanted to go to South Africa as a nurse, for she remembered that in one of the Indian rebellions her little Yorkshire mother had bound up the bloody limbs of British soldiers who fought the Afghan intruders, and that to her grave the little woman would carry the deep scar a rebel bullet that tore through her scalp upon the field of battle.

Nina Farrington remained in New York and raised money for the English Red Cross Society, however. One day as she read the war dispatches she came across a name that made the hot blood mount to her cheeks and called up the picture of a little Yorkshire vil-

lage green with the boys and girls romping across it in the starlight.

"Lieutenant John Lesmoir Gordon, shot through the leg, walked fifteen miles through the enemy's country with dispatches," was all the paper said.

But day after day as little mentions of the Highlander kept appearing, she remembered more and more of his handsome look, as a Rugby boy, he danced with the village girls on a night of long ago.

Nina Farrington now had a house in New York. She had a house at Narragansett Pier, where she had lived several Summers with Anna Robinson.

### Goes Back to Europe.

Her cottage at Swampscott, Mass., and its luxurious furnishings made a distinct sensation along the North Shore, where her costumes, trappings and yachts made her the most talked-about woman of the Summer colony for several seasons.

Her last appearance in Boston was at the Columbia, where she appeared in support of Marie Dressler. In New York her last appearance was during the time she was a member of "The Hall of Fame" company at the New York Theater.

A few months ago Fanny Ward, having become the richest woman in England through the death of her husband, advised Nina Farrington to return to Europe to be near her family. She went to London under contract with George Edwardes to open in "The Orchid."

The night that she was to appear John Lesmoir Gordon, lieutenant of the First Life Guards of London, received a note, presumably from Mrs. Fanny Ward Lewis, telling him to be sure and see Nina Farrington in "The Orchid," that night. The name stuck strangely in his memory, but he could not place it.

As the curtain went up the soldier leveled his glass at the stage, and as he caught sight of the handsome face of Nina Farrington, more beautiful and womanly, but the same face that he had admired years before at the village in York, his exclamation of surprise attracted attention in nearby boxes.

### Weds Her First Love.

At the same time Nina Farrington's eyes caught sight of a brown, sun-tanned face in the audience, a face that was strangely familiar and which spoiled her acting for that night. In fact her dismal failure that first evening probably resulted in her decision that the part she had come to England to take in "The Orchid" was not fitted to her and she did not again appear.

But when she left the theater that night, among those waiting at the stage door was John Lesmoir Gordon, of the First Life Guards, and the warm grasp of his hand was the friendliest she had known since her return to England.

Miss Farrington cancelled her contract and was approached by the management of the Moulin Rouge in Paris, and accepted a part in one of the principal reviews running there.

Her romantic marriage to Lieutenant John Lesmoir Gordon, of the First Life Guards, and the select little reception afterward at the home of Mrs. Fanny Ward Lewis, at which some of the best known artists in London were present, was the next bit of information that came to the New York friends of the two women who for so many years have been well known to theatrical people and the public in most American cities.

Mrs. Nina Farrington Gordon and her husband will reside in a pretty villa at Lea, in Kent. Lieutenant Gordon has a fortune of his own, and Miss Farrington herself has accumulated considerable property.

Fanny Ward, in spite of her millions, has come back to the stage and revels in fine clothes, and won the prize for the best-dressed woman of the coronation year. She prophesies that Miss Farrington will not long be content to lead the humdrum life of a matron and that she will soon follow her back into the fascinating glow of the footlights.